Gen. Mercier——A Pictorial Character Study——Dreyfus

BY

DAVENPORT,

The Journal's Famous Cartoonist.

"General Mercier's countenance, although it bore a certain class of military dignity, would stand for almost any crime."

When we go to buy a horse or a dog about the first thing we notice is the features of the face and head. We look first to the expression of the eye; next at the general shape of the head, the relation in which the eye is set to the ear, and so on, until the physiognomy has been well worked over. Any intelligent person who is at all careful in his observations can take a strange dog and in twenty-four hours understand him thoroughly, just by close observations of his character and expressions. Dumb animals are, however, much easier to study than human beings, because human beings, as a rule, know their own shortcomings, and try to hide them by conversation. A horse or a dog, however, will act just as he feels, under any kind of circumstances.

I suppose there is no person in my acquaintance who wastes as much time as I do studying the characters, not only of men, but everything. I have always found it very amusing, and when I was seated at the Dreyfus trial in Rennes, a glance or two in the audience made me fully aware that I had never been permitted to witness so many kinds of different character in one room. Of course, the prisoner I at once knew. But there were many present that I did not. In fact, I knew hardly any one of the others. I was seated near the generals, but knew none of their names.

There was one man who sat among them in citizen's dress whom I did not even know was a general. I remarked to Melton Pryor, the English war artist, that the man sitting just opposite him must be surely a man strongly against Dreyfus, as I noticed he wore a very heavy and at times almost brutal expression. He smiled and asked me if I was new in the place, and I told him yes, and he informed me that the man was General Mercier. I looked first at Mercier and next at Dreyfus. The contrast was about the same as that between a mule and a horse.

Dreyfus really looked an innocent man—innocent of any crime you could have thought of, while General Mercier's countenance, although it bore a certain class of military dignity, would stand for almost any crime. In the first place, his eyes were not visible over ten feet away, other than that of an ugly shaped black gash in his face. Very close to him, however, you could see a remarkably cold eye. I noticed him bow to a lady and smile. The eye did not change at all in its expression, had none of the twinkle usually in the eye of a person when smiling. The muscles of his face simply grew in a way that caused the smile, and his hand moved slowly to his head, and he took off his hat as mechanically as though it had been automatic.

The General's nose is the type of nose that belongs on some sour, crabbed disposition. The wrinkles fall away from the nose, down to the chin and under the neck—wrinkles that have been caused by years of military red tape. His mustache, which covered his mouth, but which in its covering failed to hide the expression, was one of the most cruel affairs you ever saw. The small goatee added again only military sternness, which was nine-tenths bluff. The chin is that small, drawn-under affair, commonly known throughout the country as the weak chin. Although you find it on game men many times, it is rarely found on brave men. A man can be "game" without being brave. In other words, you might find some men who could stand and let another fellow pummel his head for a week and never would howl "enough." Still this same man you could not hire to get in a boat and ride over a dozen or two torpedoes into the Bay of Manila.

The coarsest expression, however, I think, that comes from General Mercier's face is that from his cold, cheerless eye. But next to his eye cruelty is exhibited in the back of his head. His head is as straight up the back as the coarsest prize-fighter in the country. There are two kinds of heads noticeable, both of which are straight up the back. But in one you find the gentlest sort of men—great firmness. In the other you find the brute. And in both instances the back of the heads are a good deal the same.

The old General's pallor of face is that found on a man who is disagreeable even to himself. His French is of a snarling, hateful tone, and the expression of his face while talking looks like a man going mad. His ear is good and well shaped. Had he had a small, cramped up ear, with the features of his face the same as they are, he would have been the most hated private in the French army, as well as the most dangerous one. But his ear, as it is, is beyond question the ear that belongs on a broad-minded man. And it is almost a wonder that the ear alone doesn't come to the rescue of the rest of his face, and make him see things as the rest of the world does. But it is hardly likely that an ear, though a good one, can overpower that expression of eye and mouth, and the contour of the back of his head.

Now, on the other hand, or, rather, across the room, sits Captain Dreyfus. Not even had you seen him in the cage on Devil's Island, with the irons on his wrists and ankles and knees, could you be convinced that he was any kind of a criminal. The general shape of his head is like that of the ordinary good citizen, although he appears with the head closely clipped. Most all of our heads would show at a disadvantage under those conditions. Still, with Dreyfus, his head stands the clipping, which the heads of many of our high officials would not.

It is not likely a fair test to look into the face of a man whose sufferings could never be described—a man whose sufferings and hardships have caused premature age to show itself from his finger tips to the top of his head. Such a man is Captain Dreyfus. His cheeks and temples, and the drawn expression around his mouth, and the little of the stare that is exhibited in his yet soft eye, recall one of the most dreadful stories that this or any other world has ever heard. Yet under these conditions close observation cannot unearth any trace of any kind of a criminal in his make-up. Sometimes we find in the penitentiaries, and sometimes we see on the gallows, men with fine shaped heads and features. But invariably in the eye you are made to feel sad by discovering that almost milky gray eye which invariably accompanies the worst tempers known.

And in these terrible tempers, unless some other bump of the head or face can hold it back, these otherwise good men sometimes do dreadful things. And in one minute after commence to weaken and sob the balance of their lives. But Dreyfus's eye, when you get close to him, is the eye see commonly in the kind, but very energetic man. Even yet it has some of the sparkle of hope. But its most striking feature, I think, is the general expression of truthfulness.

His nose is the kind we pass a hundred a day and would never attract your attention as being anything out of the ordinary. I don't think I could even tell his nationality by the nose. The mouth has a pathetic expression, which I think has been caused by the man's experiences in the world. But mouth and chin are those that belong on the straightforward, energetic and very brave man—a type of man that would go over the torpedoes.

His ear is good and the head generally well shaped—although there is a slight peculiarity of the forehead. Still I don't think it means anything more bad or good. His expression while he sits and looks, as near as he can from his position into the eye of the witness, is one steady, thoughtful, truthful expression.

Dreyfus looks exactly the man who is waiting under terrible suspense, trying to get the truth. While some others in he court room and the generals in particular, sneer at him, in their remarks, they bring forth no smile, no change in his expression. When he talks he is the ablest man in the court room, and if he had strength he needs no counsel.

HOMER DAVENPORT.

"Not even had you seen Dreyfus in the cage on Devil's Island with irons on his wrists could you be convinced that he was any kind of a criminal."

"The back of his head is as straight as the coarsest prize fighters in the country."

"His mustache covers his mouth, but fails to hide the most cruel expression you ever saw."

JUDGING character has become quite common, so common. In fact, that the people who a few years ago made a living by it, travelling in the small towns of the country, as a sort of a show, would now starve to death. When we meet a person nowadays, especially if there is any importance attached to his name, we at once scan his features, to see if his face bears out the reputation of the man. This has become such a habit that the phrenologists and palmists and face readers have found their business being stolen by almost every person mixed up in the general walks of life.

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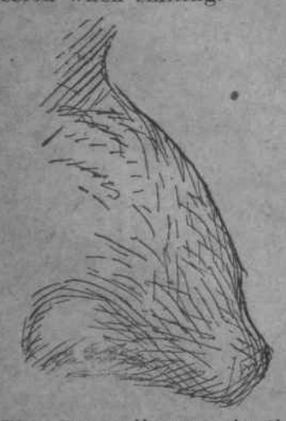

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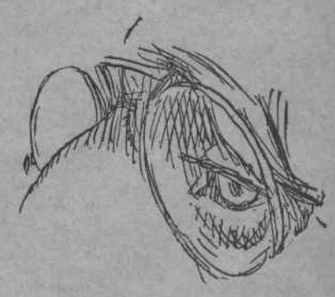

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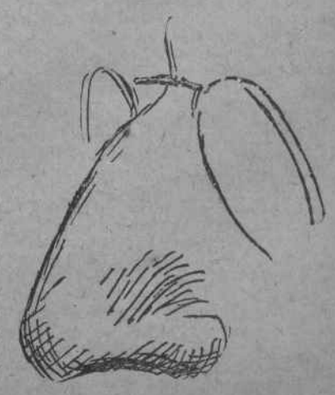


"His nose would never attract your attention."

A Missourian Owns Josephine's Pearl Necklace.

THE Empress Josephine's famous pearl necklace, the gift of Napoleon and his favorite of all her jewels, has become the property of Myron A. Davis, one of the wealthiest citizens of St. Joseph, Mo.

Mr. Davis inherited it from an aunt, who was a rich collector of gems in Amsterdam, Holland. The unhappy Josephine bequeathed the necklace to her daughter, Hortense Beauharnais, who was afterward Queen of Holland.

The set contains 12,000 pearls. This will seem an impossible number until it is remembered that latterly the Empress of the French substantially remodelled her once beautiful figure. Where age was making her deficient she supplied the discrepancy with wax forms, so that a few years before her death she went about practically encased in wax. To conceal this fact she wore enormous and close-woven necklaces. The pearls are strung on horsehair and set in mother of pearl. The workmanship is exceedingly delicate, and the design is exquisite.

SCHOOL FOR STATESMEN'S CHILDREN.

MISS EMILY E. BRIGGS, one of the wealthiest women in Washington, D. C., is about to open a novel school for the daughters of Senators and Congressmen. It is to be known as the Olivia University.

"So many Senators and Congressmen have come to me for advice as to how to educate their daughters that I am opening this school as a standing answer to the question. Without exception all these law makers who consulted me have said that their daughters realized the vicissitudes of political life, and wanted to be prepared to earn their own living if need be. I shall open the Olivia University to meet this need. It has been a pet project of mine for several years.

"I shall open the school in my own home here on Capitol Hill, and across the street are seven houses to receive the overflow when my own home is too small. We will have a department of applied art and will pay especial attention to designing patterns for oilcloths, carpets and wall paper. That opens up a great industrial field for women.

"We will have a horticultural department and make a specialty of landscape gardening. Women of artistic perceptions are particularly adapted to this line.

"We will have a department of journalism. I shall have charge of it myself, for before Providence granted me a fortune I was a newspaper woman. I shall give my pen name 'Olivia,' to the institution. The school is not to be in any sense a charitable one. It is for rich girls or those in comfortable circumstances, who wish to provide against possible poverty."

Mrs. Briggs is the widow of John Briggs, long financial clerk of the House of Representatives. By the careful investment of a small inheritance she became one of the richest women in the United States. For a time she was prominent in society. Then she wearied of it, and has for years led a life of seclusion, while she has been fostering this pet plan of hers. The "Olivia University" will open this Fall or Winter.

The Perils of Steeple-

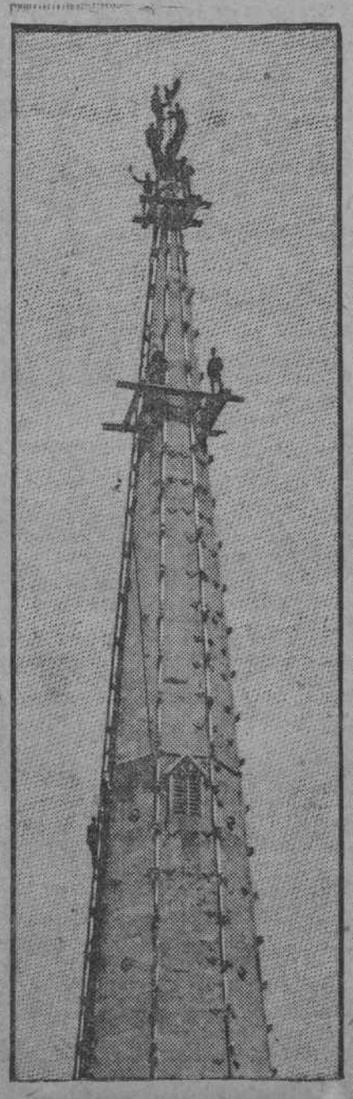
PERILOUS as seems to the lay mind the position of the little black figures shown in our illustration, at the top of Norwich Cathedral spire—the highest (except Salisbury) in England—to them it is but an everyday occurrence, interesting in the present instance, but unpleasant if the pinnacle to be reached is a chimney belching out fire and smoke.

The method of ascent is as follows: Each ladder, sixteen feet in length, is provided at the top with iron sockets, into which the next ladder fits. To each section of ladder there are two "dogs"—iron staples driven into the stonework, to which the ladders are tied with rope. A "dog" is first driven in a foot or two from the base of the spire.

A ladder is fastened to this, and the steeplejack climbs to the top, which is, of course, still unfastened, and sways somewhat, drives in his second "dog," and fastens the first section. Then comes a feat which the steeplejack regards carelessly, but which few men could contemplate without a shudder at so great a height, for he mounts the ladder already in position, sits astride the top rung, and, without any support save the grip of his legs, hammers in the lowermost "dog" of the next section of ladder.

The second ladder is then so bound with rope that about half of it projects beyond the end of the first, and, mounting to the extremity, the steeplejack drives in another of his staples, and hauls the ladder up till it fits into the sockets, and then makes it fast. The most dangerous part is taking the ladders down, for, as each ladder is unfastened from the top "dog," the upper part of it swings free, and, unless great care is taken, the weight of the man at the top would exercise so much leverage as to pull out the bottom fastening.

The men, of course, grow quite accustomed to their calling, nor do they feel any of the sensations of dizziness and desire to throw themselves down, about which they are questioned by the uninitiated. In twenty-five years the steeplejacks have had no accident. Special precautions are taken when amateurs, such as the architects or venturesome reporters, undertake the ascent.



Spire of Norwich Cathedral, England, with Steeple Jacks at Work

Women Must Have a License to Wheel in Kenosha

A KENOSHA (Wis.) attorney has drawn an ordinance which will be presented to the Council at its next meeting, which will probably cause a great deal of dissension, especially among women.

This remarkable ordinance has the audacity to provide:

"That on and after the passage and publication of this ordinance it shall be unlawful for any female to engage in the riding of any bicycle or velocipede on any street, alley or other public thoroughfare within the corporate limits of the city of Kenosha without having first obtained from the City Clerk of said city of Kenosha a license which shall be issued under the following circumstances, to wit:

"That said female shall appear in person before the clerk of the said city of Kenosha and shall be examined by a competent commission as to her ability to ride such a vehicle without endangering the safety and personal rights of other citizens of the city."

AN ICE CAVE HAS BEEN FOUND IN UTAH.

UTAH, the State that produced the prophet Brigham Young and the Polygamist Congressman Brigham H. Roberts and the girl Sheriff, Claire Ferguson, has produced yet another wonder. This time it is an ice cave.

So remarkable is this ice cave that it bids fair to become a rival of that other subterranean marvel, Mammoth Cave. It is located in Northeastern Utah, near Lake Baldy, one of the highest peaks of the Wasatch Range. The cave has been explored a distance of 1,000 feet from its mouth, but there exploration has been stopped by a log jam that has closed the opening into the next underground chamber. The mouth of the cave is 20 feet wide and 40 feet high. A few feet from the entrance is a manstrous icicle or ice column eight feet in diametre. It reaches from the floor to the ceiling, a distance of 75 feet. The column has been formed by the dripping of water overhead. It is a clear, sapphire-like blue.

Passing this great guarding column, the explorer finds a dozen small pools. Some of them are covered with a coat of ice two inches thick, of a solidity to charm a skater. Others are of warm, almost hot, water. The pools are fed by small streams, some hot, some cold, that ooze from crannies in the wall. All about stand pillars of ice little smaller than the giant guarding the entrance.

The most curious feature of the cave is that a dozen currents of air, varying in temperature from Arctic cold to Sahara heat, play about in it, and make the visitor fancy he is having an attack of ague.

Sometimes a fierce flood from Brush Creek drives a mass of floating logs through the entrance of the cave, and across its thousand feet of pools of varying temperature to the mouth of the second of the series of caves, effectually barricading it.

Mormon settlers had heard of this cave of ice from vagrant Indians, but it remained for two snub-nosed, red-haired, freckled urchins of ten and twelve years to find it while "herdin' cows."

Climbing in England.